

Split disbursement mandatory for military members

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS

DOUG SAMPLE

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3, 2003 — A new requirement under the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act has made it mandatory for military government travel card users to use the "split disbursement" option when filing temporary duty travel claims, according to a press release by the Defense Finance and Accounting Office in Indianapolis.

In split disbursement, the government pays the credit card vendor directly when a traveler uses the card and files a voucher for reimbursement, while additional money owed to the traveler goes to the traveler's bank account.

Without split disbursement, the traveler receives the entire voucher settlement, and in turn pays the credit card bill.

Until the new policy took effect in April, military people could choose between split disbursement or receiving the entire settlement and paying the credit card bill themselves. Civilian federal workers still have that choice.

Split disbursement is seen as a way to pay the official travel card expenses quickly, and at a cost savings to cardholders, according to information on the DFAS Web site. The option eliminates the need to write out personal checks or pay for stamps to mail payments.

The change also affects partial and accrual payments for long-term temporary travel and local travel, if a government credit card is used.

According to the DFAS release, military travelers must now include all official expenses charged on the credit card in the split disbursement

payment block of their travel settlement vouchers. These charges will be paid directly to the vendor — currently Bank of America — by DFAS. The release states that supervisors, travel approving officials and reviewers must return to military travelers claims that do not accurately reflect charges that are to be paid to the credit card vendor. In addition, a reviewer's signature is required on the travel claim before it is sent to DFAS for payment. The reviewer must also sign off that the split disbursement option is included and the amount of the split disbursement is accurate, the release stated.

The move to make split disbursement mandatory for military traveler may be seen as a way to curb delinquencies in government credit card accounts held by military personnel. According to a General Accounting

Office report in October 2002, military government cardholders were responsible for more than \$60 million in bad debt charged off by Bank of America earlier that year. But DFAS spokesman Roger Still states on the Web site that overall the number of DOD credit-card holders with delinquent accounts is a "small percentage" of the total population who have the card.

He said in August about 1.7 percent of all DOD cardholders had delinquent accounts. "So the bottom line is, more than 98 percent of DOD cardholders pay their bills on time, while the commercial sector regularly sees delinquency rates of about 4 percent," he explained.

For more information on the new split disbursement policy, call 846-8045 or go to the DFAS Web site <http://www.dfas.mil>.

Checklist for temporary duty travel settlement vouchers

This checklist should be used by travelers to ensure their travel claims are proper and complete and comply with the intent of the order before submitting them to the reviewing/approving official for signature.

Temporary Duty claims must be submitted within 5 days upon completion of travel.

1.) _____ The Travel Voucher must be prepared in ink or computer generated.

2.) _____ Your original signature must be in block 20a, and dated in block 20b on the travel voucher.

3.) _____ For Military only, the supervisor or approving official will review all travel claims and sign the travel voucher prior to submission for payment.

4.) _____ Each travel voucher prepared by a military traveler, must split disburse the minimum required charges directly to the Bank of America.

5.) _____ Implementation of split disbursement and travel claim review will not occur for civilian personnel until all bargaining labor obligations have been completed. How-

ever, civilians are highly encouraged to use split disbursement.

6.) _____ All information in blocks 1-9 and 11 of the travel voucher must be completed. Provide a duty phone number and e-mail address.

7.) _____ Are advances and/or accrued per diem payments listed in block 9? Annotate "none" in block 9 if there were no advances or partial payments. Do not indicate ATM cash withdrawals in block 9.

8.) _____ The itinerary in block 15a must be completed using dates, modes of travel and reason for stops. Refer to the reverse page of the DD1351-2 for correct "modes of travel" and "reason for stop" codes.

9.) _____ Is block 16 checked if mileage is claimed? Examples of POC mileage are within and around the TDY site, to and from the airport and to and from the TDY site. In/around POC mileage must be approved/authorized. In/around mileage must be claimed and the total mileage driven each day listed.

10.) _____ Block 17 must be completed indicating the duration of TDY period.

11.) _____ Claim all of your authorized expenses in block 18. Mission related items (i.e. batteries/film) are not reimbursable travel expenses and should be submitted through Vendor Pay.

12.) _____ Were rental car expenses claimed? Rental Car receipts are required regardless of dollar amount IAW DFAS-IN 37-1-100102(3). Pre-calculation receipts are not acceptable. Include a copy of your government CTO itinerary.

13.) _____ Are control numbers for non-availability of government quarters in the remarks block of the orders? If not, you must have the Approving Official's signature to authorize commercial lodging or have an amended order issued. (Military members only)

14.) _____ Is lodging claimed and supported by original paid receipts or a justification statement attached explaining why receipts are not available?

15.) _____ Are reimbursable expenses of \$75.00 or more claimed on the travel voucher and supported by an original paid receipt or justifica-

tion statement explaining why receipts are not attached (absence of receipt form).

16.) _____ Is a conference or registration fee claimed? If so, state the number of meals provided at no cost in block 19.

17.) _____ Exchange rate when foreign currency is involved must be indicated on the travel voucher. The traveler must include the expense in both foreign currency and U.S. dollars.

18.) _____ Was leave taken in conjunction with TDY? If so, was it annotated in the itinerary and in block 29, Remarks section?

19.) _____ Are there specific items not in the original order that require an amended order or the authorization and signature of the Approving Official?

20.) _____ Are the required orders, receipts, statements, justifications, etc., attached to the travel claim?

21.) _____ Did you forward your completed travel voucher and supporting documents to your supervisor or approving official for authorization? (Military members only)

22.) Call 846-8045 or e-mail finance@kirtland.af.mil

Get Out! Stay Out!

*Fire Prevention Week
runs Oct. 5-11*

This year's Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11. The Fire Prevention Week campaign is "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!"

This campaign teaches two simple but life saving lessons. Install smoke alarms and test them regularly and develop and practice home fire drills.

Sparky and the firefighters plan to visit the Base Child Development Centers, Wherry and Sandia Elementary schools. Fire safety theme materials will

be handed out to the children.

The Kirtland firefighters will have a display set up at the Base Exchange and will provide fire safety pamphlets and other handouts. They will also be available to answer questions relating to fire safety in the home and the workplace.

This year the Kirtland Air Force Base Fire Department plans to host an open house during Fire Prevention Week. Call 853-6699 to schedule a group tour.



Kirtland AFB Airman supports Joint Task Force

Airman 1st Class Everett Brown, 377th Services Squadron, serves a meal to a detainee at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He is one of a handful of Airmen supporting Joint Task Force, Guantanamo and is one of several people responsible for preparing and serving culturally certified meals to approximately 660 detainees. "Since we know what happened with the terrorist attacks and everything, it's sort of awkward at first, but you get used to it," Brown said of coming face-to-face with and serving detainees. "(You) just don't talk to the detainees when you serve them. Brown has been a lodging specialist at Kirtland AFB since Oct. 2002 and volunteered for the deployment so that he would have a part in the war on terrorism.

Photo by Master Sgt.
Tammy Cournoyer

Kirtland AFB honors Hispanic American contributions

Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs Sept. 15-Oct. 15, is a time to recognize the many contributions of Hispanic Americans in the success of this great nation.

The Hispanic community is representative of many cultural groups, which include roots from Central and South America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Spain. Known for their close family ties, deep-rooted religious traditions and strong work ethics, Hispanics have been an integral part of America from the early days of colonization until now. With over 30 million people claiming Hispanic origin, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in our nation.

Hispanic Americans have served in every major military conflict with heroism and valor. The nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, has been awarded to 38 Hispanics. The academic and scientific communities have benefited from contributions made by Hispanics such as Luis Walter Alvarez who, in 1986, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, and Ellen Ochoa who, in 1990, became the first Hispanic female astronaut. Works provided by Hispanics have significantly influenced the disciplines of art, legal, economic and political arenas.

From New York to California, Texas to Wisconsin, the heritage of food, culture, music and language is readily evident in everyday life. Beans, rice and tortillas have become a mainstay of American cooking.

America is continually evolving with the values, talents and spirit of Hispanic Americans.

To volunteer to help with Hispanic Heritage Month, call Capt. Rich Ruiz, 846-1570.

See Of Note, Page 9, for luncheon and Latin Dance night information.